

226 EAST MAIN STREET, WESTMINSTER

WILLIS HOUSE

In this house one can easily see the first steps of the area's architectural growth. John Clusser bought the lot in 1775 and the remains of the small log cabin that he built are still evident in the present cellar. Later generations, dissatisfied with this existence, built (c. 1810) the present 2 story 3-bay clapboard dwelling. In size, it is a logical first step beyond a 15' x 30' log cabin; in execution, it is a quantum leap, with its crisp denticulated cornice, fine door enframement, and masterfully handled scale and solid-void proportioning.

## MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

Carroll 060  
0703604384

## INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Willis House

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

226 East Main Street (MD 32)

6

CITY, TOWN

Westminster

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Carroll

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

## PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Virginia E. Robrecht

Telephone #: 848-4184

STREET &amp; NUMBER

230 East Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Westminster

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21157

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Carroll County Office Building

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Center Street

CITY, TOWN

Westminster

Liber #: 102

Folio #: 316

STATE

Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

None

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

**7 DESCRIPTION**

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Although there are local suggestions (with some evidence) that what is now number 226 East Main Street was, 200 years ago, a one story log cabin, the present house is at least a generation later. The present house is a good example of the more modest house Westminster's citizens erected in the early and Mid 19th century. It is now a 3 bay wide, 2 bay deep, 2 1/2 story building over a roughly coursed fieldstone foundation and full cellar, with a full-length 2 story (cellarless) addition to the south. Both sections are covered with clapboard. A simple flat-capped chimney rests a few inches within the west gable, piercing the black tin roof which covers both sections; the roof is very simply finished.

The door, the east ground floor bay, is simply, but elegantly treated with a flat modillion cornice, supported by rosetted scroll brackets above plain pilasters. The door itself, is a typical late 19th century half-glass, half-wood affair, with a 5-light rectangular transom above. To the east are 2 single pane double-hung sash windows with simple enframing. There are three 6/6 similar enframed windows on the second floor. All bays are vertically and horizontally aligned.

The east facade is blind; three 6/6 windows are intermittently placed along the west front. Under the south gable end is one centrally placed door per floor (that on the second floor is reached via a direct steep set of steps). A small flue is located about 10 feet from the south wall, at the peak of the roof.

In plan, the house is an expanded hall and parlor; the basement-ed section has a side stair hall, with one room to the west; beyond are 2 rooms in a line per floor. Door and stair treatment is of the simplest.

# **8 SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES	c. 1810	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Jesse Willis
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE			

The significance of 226 East Main Street is both architectural and sociological. Architecturally the house is important as an example of a hall and parlor house, a style once common in the area. The house represents the significant first step that the settlers would have taken from their not too much earlier log cabins of essentially the same plan. When John Closser bought the lot (number 41) from William Winchester on March 22, 1775, the price was 12 pounds, a low figure considering that Winchester retained "free access to the well on the lot and liberty to draw there from" (Frederick County Deed Book BD, page 185). Three lots (41, 42 and 43) were sold as a unit for 75 pounds in 1808 (WR 32/22), indicating that there was still no real construction. But when Ann Willis bought the lot for \$850 in 1819, we ought to deduce from the price that the lot was no longer unimproved. In fact, an examination of the existing cellar reveals the definite possibility that the present foundations date from the period in their massiveness and crudeness. Ann was the wife of Jesse Willis, who, the diary of Katharine Jones Shellman records, lived here between 1822-32, and running an "iron store".

The lot changed hands several times until the present owner's father took title on September 21, 1905 (Deed 102/316).

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Being the western half of lot 41 of the original plat of Westminster  
as recorded among the Land Records of Frederick County in Book L, page 472.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Christopher Weeks, Consultant

October, 1976

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Westminster Historical Sites Survey

STREET &amp; NUMBER

TELEPHONE

c/o City Hall - Public Works Department

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Westminster

Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created  
by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the  
Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA,  
1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information  
and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringe-  
ment of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438



CARR 360

224 E. Main St.  
Westminster

S. facade

10/74 C. Weeks

83 70 + 40 070





Inventory - Sect. A  
A-9

83% History Section  
Chapter 4  
P. 27  
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CAAN 360

226 E. MAW ST.

WESTMINSTER

N. Jacobs

C. Wick 4/77



Carr 360

226 E. Main St. Westminster

NW Jucahes

10/74 C Weeks